

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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UNCLAS BUCHAREST 2008
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SUBJECT: VISIT OF AMSPECSCARY FROMM

1. SUMMARY. THE APRIL 8-11 VISIT OF AMSPEC GARY FROMM HELPED EMBOFFS DEVELOP AND SOLIDIFY CONTACTS WITH ROMANIAN OFFICIALS IN THE ECONOMETRICS, PLANNING AND COMPUTER WORLDS. DURING HIS THREE-DAY STAY DR FROMM LECTURED AT THE ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES (ASE), AND CARRIED ON INTENSIVE, PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSIONS WITH ROMANIAN OFFICIALS FROM THE ACADEMY, THE INSTITUTES FOR INFORMATICS, ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND CYBERNETICS, AND THE GOR STATE PLANNING COMMISSION. ALTHOUGH NOT AN ELECTRIFYING SPEAKER IN A LECTURE CONTEXT, DR FROMM'S FACILITY FOR GENERATING RELAXED, OPEN PROFESSIONAL DISCUSSIONS IN SMALL GATHERINGS MADE HIS VISIT ESPECIALLY PRODUCTIVE.

2. DR FROMM'S VISIT TO BUCHAREST BEGAN APRIL 8 WITH A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE STATE OF ECONOMETRIC STUDIES IN THE U S AND ROMANIA WITH EMPHASIS ON THE LATTER. HIS INTERLOCUTORS WERE SIX SPECIALISTS FROM THE FACULTY OF THE ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES, WITH WHOM HE MET LATER IN HIS STAY EITHER IN EVEN SMALLER GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALLY TO PURSUE SUBJECTS FIRST RAISED IN THIS INITIAL GATHERING.

3. THE NEXT DAY DR FROMM AND OUR ECONOMIC COUNSELOR CALLED
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ON TWO DIRECTORS OF THE ROMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION, AN

IMPORTANT GOR INSTITUTION RARELY PENETRATED BY EMBOFFS.
HERE HIS DISCUSSIONS CENTERED UPON ROMANIAN PLANNING PROCESS
AND APPLICATION OF ECONOMETRIC MODELS TO THAT PROCESS.

4. LATER THE SAME DAY DR FROMM LECTURED IN THE ACADEMY
BEFORE A GROUP OF 50 PROFESSORS, RESEARCHERS AND GRADUATE
STUDENTS ON ECONOMETRICS IN THE U S TODAY. ALTHOUGH HIS
LECTURE PRESENTATION TENDED TO BE SOMEWHAT STILTED (HE READ
FROM A PREPARED TEXT), IT MUST HAVE BEEN SATISFACTORY FROM
THE ROMANIAN POINT OF VIEW JUDGING FROM THE STIMULATING Q & A
SESSION THAT ENSUED. AT VARIOUS POINTS IN THE DISCUSSION
HIS AUDIENCE GRILLED DR FROMM ON THE APPLICATION OF ECONOMETRICS
TO ECONOMIC PLANNING, THE POTENTIAL FOR EMPLOYING ECONOMETRIC
MODELS IN LONG TERM ECONOMIC FORECASTING, AND WHETHER
ECONOMETRIC PREDICTIONS ARE HEEDDED BY U S POLICYMAKERS.
THESE ARE ALL ISSUE OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE ROMANIAN
ECONOMETRIC COMMUNITY. FOLLOWING HIS LECTURE DR FROMM MET WITH
TWO LEADING ROMANIAN RESEARCHERS IN THE FIELD OF ECONOMETRICS,
DRS VLADIMIR HOROVITZ AND AUREL IACPU. HERE HE LEARNED ABOUT
WHICH ECONOMETRIC MODELS ARE BEING USED IN GOR-COMMISSIONED
FORECASTS AND GAVE THE EMBOFF WHO ACCOMPANIED HIM AN OPPORTUNITY
TO GARNER INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT THOSE FORECASTS ARE PREDICTING
FOR THE ROMANIAN ECONOMY 25 AND 35 YEARS HENCE.

5. DR FROMM'S REPUTATION EVIDENTLY PRECEDED HIM TO BUCHAREST.
IN MEETING AFTER MEETING HE WAS TOLD THAT ROMANIAN SPECIALISTS
WERE FAMILIAR WITH HIS WORK AND EAGER TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE
ACTIVITIES HE IS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN AT THE NATIONAL BUREAU
OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH. THIS CULMINATED WHEN DR ION ROMANU
DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL INSTITUTE FOR MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATICS
ROMANIA'S CZAR OF THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY, SUMMONED DR FROMM TO
A MEETING THAT HAD NOT BEEN ANTICIPATED IN HIS SCHEDULE.
WE WERE TOLD THAT DR ROMANU HAD ONLY LEARNED APRIL J THAT
DR FROMM WAS IN COUNTRY, AND WOULD BE GREATLY DISAPPOINTED
IF THEY WOULD NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO CHAT. THEY DID APRIL 10,
FOR ALMOST THREE HOURS FOLLOWING AN EARLY MORNING CALL AT
ASE'S CYBERNETICS INSTITUTE. ROMANU DEVOTED ONE HOUR TO
DESCRIBING THE CENTRAL INSTITUTE'S ORGANIZATION AND PRIORITIES,
AND TO QUESTIONS ABOUT NBER. HE AND DR FROMM THEN ENTERED
INTO A MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION OF ECONOMETRIC MODELING AND
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PRICING IN GOR PLANNING.

6. DR XPOMM CAME TO BUCHAREST WELL VERSED IN THE ROMANIAN
ECONOMY AND IN THE GENERAL STATE OF ROMANIAN ECONOMIC PLANNING.
IN FACT HE IS ONE OF AN ALL-TOO-SELECT GROUP OF AMSPECS AND
VOLSPKRS WHO HAVE READ THEIR BRIEFING PAPERS AND PREPARED
THEMSELVES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS WITH ROMANIAN COLLEAGUES.
THIS GOOD FOUNDATION ENABLED HIM TO TAKE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE

OF HIS FEW MEETINGS WITH ROMANIANS. HE ALSO EXHIBITED A WELCOME WILLINGNESS TO LEARN WHAT ISSUES WERE OF INTEREST TO ROMANIANS, AND HE THEN WOULD RAISE THEM IN AN APPROPRIATE CONTEXT WITH ROMANIANS. IN THIS WAY WE TOO TOOK AWAY CONSIDERABLE INFORMATION FROM HIS MEETINGS. DR FROMM IS ARTICULATE AND BRINGS A SOLID, WORLD-CLASS REPUTATION WITH HIM TO HIS PROGRAMS IN EASTERN EUROPE. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT RECOMMEND HIM FOR LECTURES THAT MUST BE TRANSLATED, WE ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSE HIM FOR MORE INTIMATE PROGRAMS, FROM WHICH POSTS STAND TO GAIN MORE ANYWAY CONCERNING SUCH A SPECIALIZED TOPIC. ONE PROGRAM ELEMENT CONSPICUOUSLY ABSENT WAS DR FROMM'S LATEST BOOK, WHICH WE COULD HAVE DISTRIBUTED TO GREAT ADVANTAGE IN ROMANIA.

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